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SUBJECT: THAI MUSICIANS AND ACTORS PROTEST IP VIOLATIONS, POLICE
ENFORCEMENT

1. (U) Over 300 representatives of local rights holders from the music and movie industries recently staged a protest in front of the Plab Pla Chai police station in Bangkok. IP protestors targeted that station as it oversees the district with the highest concentration of wholesale and retail piracy sales in Bangkok. Rights holders protested the performance of Police Major General Apichart Chuathate who had earlier promised removal of pirated goods from notorious piracy markets of Klong Tom, Ban Mor and Saphan Lek within his police district. The protest followed on two earlier demonstrations last November at the same police station. Police officials, including General Apichart, met with rights holders after the earlier protests and denied allegations at the time that police officers were accepting bribes from retailers of pirated products. Police promised to crack down harder on piracy but complained they could only act on complaints from rights holders. In response, rights holders ensured all members of the industry associations had complaints on file with the police, but said they still saw no improvement in enforcement.

2. (U) Mr. Suthisak Prasartkrakarn, Secretary-General of the Thai Music Industry Association claimed the piracy situation had actually worsened in the past few months, identifying 350 shops selling pirated goods versus only 20 selling legitimate product in those areas. To bring the point home, protestors set up a large screen TV displaying a live broadcast of customers purchasing pirated products in the Klong Tom market, a sprawling area selling cheap electronic goods along with a large number of pirated movies and music, located only 500 yards down the street from the police station. After the protest, piracy sales reportedly dropped off significantly in many of the street stalls selling bootleg movies and music in Klong Tom and other markets within the police district. Retailers said police had asked them to hold off on sales "for a while."

3. (SBU) The local representative for the Motion Picture Association said representatives of the music and movie industries were looking forward to a February 12 meeting with newly inaugurated PM Samak Sundravej. Scheduled as a congratulatory call, industry members planned to discuss the IPR situation as well. The delegation would be led by local industry but would include international rights holders. The group is considering requesting PM Samak to transfer Police General Apichart but had yet to decide whether to broach the topic. MPA's representative suspected that the recent dropoff in sales of pirated products was directly related to next week's meeting with the PM.

JOHN